

Amendments To The Claim:

1.-3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended) A method for relaying Internet Protocol (IP) packets to an external control component assigned to a network node in a communication network, the communication network having a plurality of network nodes and switching IP packets, the method comprising:

receiving an in-band IP signaling packet at an external interface of a plurality of external interfaces of the network node;

connecting the external interface to the external control component;

identifying the packet as an RSVP (Resource Reservation Protocol) type of packet;

if the in-band IP signaling packet is intended for the external control component,

modifying a DSCP (Differentiated Services Code Point) field in the header of the packet as a function of the receiving external interface, wherein the DSCP field contains ~~the~~ a value uniquely assigned to the receiving external interface; and

based on the value uniquely assigned to the receiving external interface, identifying which external interface of the plurality of external interfaces received the in-band IP signaling packet;

routing the modified packet to the external control component connected to the identified external interface, and thus relaying Internet Protocol (IP) packets to the external control component assigned to the network node.

5. (cancelled)

6. (cancelled)